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SUBJECT: 239TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH
THE HOST COUNTRY

¶1. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country met on October 2, 2008. Acting Chairman, Branimir Zaimov, (Bulgaria) oversaw the election of Cypriot Perm Rep Ambassador Minas Hadjimichael as the Committee chair. The new Chair then greeted the committee and introduced new UN Assistant-Secretary for Legal Affairs, Peter Taksoe-Jensen. USUN Minister Counselor for Host Country Affairs congratulated the new Chairman on behalf of the USG, and stated that he looked forward to cooperation with him in the work of the committee.

Cuban Complaint re: treatment at airport of its Vice President.

¶2. Cuban Permanent Representative, Amb. Rodrigo Malmierca Diaz, protested an incident that transpired on the 20th of September, 2008, claiming that U.S. authorities took inappropriate action against Cuba's Vice President, Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, head of his Cuba's delegation to the UNGA, while he was passing through customs. Amb. Malmierca complained that, although Cuba had complied with the Courtesies of the Port request procedures, Mr. Machado was forced to remove his shoes, jacket, and belt and submit to a full body inspection "by technical means." Malmierca stated that the actions taken by the US authorities were in violation of the host country's obligations under the Vienna Convention (VCDR) to adopt all appropriate measures to ease the arrival of a foreign official. He demanded a thorough investigation of the matter and a prompt response.

¶3. USUN/HC MinCouns replied that Cuba had followed the appropriate procedures and noted that USUN had taken extra steps to ensure that Mr. Machado received Courtesies of the Port from US authorities at Montreal's Trudeau International Airport, prior to his arrival at New York's La Guardia airport. USUN/HC MinCouns gave detailed information on the dates that contacts had been made and assured the committee that all appropriate courtesies had been extended by the USG in the area under its jurisdiction at the airport. He stated that the host country did not know precisely what had transpired following Mr. Machado's passage through U.S. Customs. He also emphasized that United States Government aviation security personnel neither have a presence at, or any authority over, the security procedures carried out at airports in other countries. As it was clear that the incident affecting Machado was not the responsibility of the host country, the Committee was not the appropriate forum in which to discuss the matter further.

¶4. An irritated Malmierca took the floor again, noting that Cuba had been informed that the incident had occurred in an area that was under the control of U.S. authorities. He offered that if this were not the case, it might have even happened "on another planet." Unfortunately the Canadian

delegation, which was aware that Canada's airport security agency (CATSA) had caused the incident, and had admitted as much to the Cuban Mission, did not intervene to address the matter. The Chairman stated that the Committee took note of the interchange and suggested that discussions outside of the committee might resolve the matter.

15. The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 31 October 2008, to adopt the Committee's annual report.
Wolff